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WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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NOTE: This column is being submitted by Sen. Scott Fitzgerald for your consideration to print.

Kick Off Summer Tourism in Wisconsin's Outdoors

Earlier this spring, the Wisconsin Department of Tourism celebrated National Travel and Tourism week by announcing that the state's tourism economy topped \$19.3 billion in 2015, an increase of over a billion dollars from the previous year. Last year, the tourism industry supported 190,717 jobs and visitors to the badger state generated \$1.5 billion in revenue for state and local economies.

It comes as no surprise that Wisconsin's tourism industry is never more vibrant than in the summer months, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is offering the perfect kickoff for this year's summer tourism season with a "Free Fun" weekend on June 4th and 5th. This weekend only, residents and visitors alike can enjoy some of Wisconsin's most popular outdoor activities and take in some of the state's greatest scenic areas, all absolutely free!

This weekend, visit any of Wisconsin's more than 60 State Parks and Forests or enjoy the state's 41 state trails at no cost. All trail pass fees are waived, so visitors are welcome to hike, bike, horseback ride, or even take out the ATV. The DNR provides helpful information on the most ideal trails for various activities, the best family-friendly hiking options, and even tips on the most scenic locations.

For even more outdoor fun, fish for free—no license needed—on any of Wisconsin's 15,000 lakes, 40,000 miles of rivers, and two Great Lakes. You can even brush up on your skills first by attending one of the free fishing clinics to be hosted around the state. Don't have fishing equipment? You can borrow rods, reels, hooks, lines, sinkers, and more for free at many state parks, DNR offices, and partner organizations. Remember to check the state rules for size restrictions and limits before you go!

Wisconsin has countless opportunities for enjoying the great outdoors—it is no wonder that our state ranks 1st in the Midwest for outdoor recreation. The upcoming Free Fun weekend is a fantastic opportunity to kick off the summer months, and a great reminder of all that Wisconsin has to offer all summer long.

Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau) represents the 13th Senate District, which covers portions of Dodge, Jefferson, Waukesha, Washington, Dane, and Columbia counties.

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